

REMARKS

The Office action dated October 24, 2008, has been fully considered. In response, please enter the amendments and consider the remarks presented herein. Reconsideration and/or further prosecution of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants have elected to cancel claims 16-18 in order to free up already paid claim fees for new claims 26, 27, and 28 which are added to depend from independent claims 25, 1, and 21, respectively. Each of these added claims recites limitations regarding the determination of the particular accounting mechanism corresponding to the particular item includes a lookup operation on an associative memory and adjunct memory, or means thereof, with support provided at least by original claims 5, 10, and 16, as well as FIGs. 8E and 8G (especially process block 888) and their discussion on pages 33-35 of the original disclosure. No new matter is added.

Furthermore, Applicants appreciate the thoughtful examination of the application; however, Applicants respectfully traverse the four-way restriction requirement as discussed hereinafter.

First, Applicants do not see a distinction arguably appropriate for a restriction requirement between Groups III (including independent claims 21 and 25) and IV (including independent claim 1), as claims 21 and 25 include basically the same limitations as claim 1, but merely in a different claim format and slightly reworded. In other words, the processor(s) of claim 25 perform the operations basically recited in claim 1, and claim 25 recites "means for" performing basically the operations basically recited in claim 1. So, it appears that a proper examination would require the same searching, and is not an excessive burden on the Office. For at least these reasons and the claims themselves, Applicants respectfully request the Office merge Groups III and IV into a single group.

Next, Applicants do not see a distinction arguably appropriate for a restriction requirement between Groups I (including independent claims 5, 10 and 16) and II (including independent claim 8), as claims 5, 10 and 16 include basically the same limitations as claim 8, but merely in a different claim format and slightly reworded. Applicants further note that claim 8 of Group II includes the element of "autonomous system number," with is also recited in

- claim 3 of Group IV;
- claim 7 of Group I;
- claim 12 of Group I; and
- claim 23 of Group III.

Therefore, the element of "autonomous system number" on which the Office appears to be basing its restriction requirement *appears in all four Groups*. So, it appears that a proper examination would require the same searching, and is not an excessive burden on the Office. For at least these reasons and the claims themselves, Applicants respectfully request the Office merge Groups III and IV into a single group. Additionally, Applicants respectfully request the Office withdraw all of its restriction requirements as there are common limitations among each Group, and there is no excessive burden placed on the Office in examining all pending claim.

Applicants provisionally elect Group III and again request that the Office also at the least also examine Group IV (claims 1-4 and 27) as this claim set is basically the method claim format of the claims in Group III as search and examination of the claims in these Groups will not cause a serious burden on the Patent Office. In fact, a serious burden arises only if the application is restricted to one of the previously identified inventions. Filing additional applications to non-elected inventions will unnecessarily burden (1) the Patent Office, because it must assume additional and unnecessary labor involved in examining separate applications, (2) the public, since it will have to examine two or more applications to fully ascertain the claimed subject matter, and (3) Applicants, since they will have to bear the substantial financial burden of multiple applications. Because the requirements for a restriction are discretionary, Applicants respectfully request examination of all of the pending claims.

Applicants further note that dependent claims 26, 27 and 28 in Group IV appear to be linking claims to Groups I and II as they recite limitations that the lookup operation is performed in an associative memory and adjunct memory which is the basic reason for a restriction requirement for Groups I and II. Therefore, especially if the Office does not allow the independent claims 21 and 25 of the provisionally elected Group III, then the Office will do a search on dependent claims 26 and 26; and therefore, the Office's rational for the restriction requirement (as being a burden as multiple classifications must be searched), would not be applicable as the Office would have searched these classifications for the recited limitations. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Office reconsider and withdraw all restriction requirements and/or rejoin all restricted claims, including examining all pending claims in conformance with MPEP § 809 *et seq.* Additionally, Applicants request the Office continue to reconsider the appropriateness of the restriction requirement during prosecution of this application, and rejoin any and all restricted claims during prosecution as provided for in the MPEP.

Final Remarks. Because the requirements for a restriction are discretionary, applicants respectfully request examination of all of the pending claims, as there is no excessive burden placed on the Office in examining all claims; rather the excessive burden is placed on the Office and Applicants if multiple applications must be filed and examined on the currently claimed subject matter.

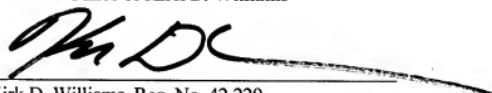
Additionally, all pending claims are believed to be allowable over all prior art of record, the application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Office is respectfully requested to issue a timely Notice of allowance in this case. Applicant requests any and all restriction requirements, rejections and/or objections be withdrawn. If, in the opinion of the Office, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Office is invited to call the undersigned attorney, as Applicants are open to discussing, considering, and resolving issues.

Applicants request a one-month extension of time is required. Should a different extension of time be deemed appropriate, Applicants hereby petition for such deemed extension of time. Applicants further authorize the charging of Deposit Account No. 501430 for any fees that may be due in connection with this paper (e.g., claim fees, extension of time fees) as required in addition to the payment made herewith using EFS-Web.

Respectfully submitted,
The Law Office of Kirk D. Williams

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By


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